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THE CRIME
AGAINST THE PRESIDENCY.

A SERMON,

By REV. WM. M. BLACKBURN.

THE CRIME

AGAINST THE PRESIDENCY.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED SUNDAY, APRIL 16, 1865,

IN THE

FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

TRENTON, N. J.,

BY THE PASTOR,

REV. WILLIAM M. BLACKBURN.

TRENTON, N. J.:
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PREFACE.

The pressure of the awful grief, under which this sermon was prepared, will be readily understood by those who were almost bewildered with sorrow during the very hours when it was written by a rapid hand. The decision for its publication has turned, not upon the author's judgment, but upon the urgent demand of many friends, into whose hands the manuscripts are now committed.

W. M. B.

Trenton, N. J., April 18, 1865.

SERMON.

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land."—JEREMIAH v. 30.

"The land of trouble and anguish, from whence came the young and old lion, the viper and the fiery flying serpent."—ISAIAH xxx. 6.

"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ, my Lord," and you know that in the pulpit my chief aim has been to point you to that cross, the standard of our holy Christianity. But now the Christian patriot's eye sees beside it the standard of his country, and the flag is draped, for the land is in tears, and would you have me to be silent? You know that I have avoided the mention of the character, the mission, the measures of the Chief Magistrate, and you knew not what I thought of him. But now a desperate murderer has taken away the veil of reserve. Can I touch upon the crime against this government, without pointing to him whom God and the people had a second time placed at the head?

The *man*, Abraham Lincoln, has been murdered by one who came up from "the land of trouble and anguish, whence come the viper and the fiery flying serpent"—the land of the dagger and the duel, where the tragedian was an insignificant player compared with the numerous actors in real tragedies of blood. After weeks of lying in wait, and after plotting a widely extended murder, he has slain the man for whom a nation mourns. What if he were the most insignificant man that walked those streets, the report of it is worthy of solemnity, tears, and the trumpet-tone of rebuke upon all who have ever

felt any malice against him, or any sympathy for the class of desperadoes that have incited this deed, and led the invasion of death into his Cabinet. His blood would cry unto God and unto this nation for justice upon *this crime against humanity.*

Do not suppose that war has produced this disregard for human life. Nay, it produced the war. It existed long before the war. It showed itself in the delight taken in the lashing of the slave, and the lynching of their "Northern brethren" on suspicion, or the striking down of Senators in the National Halls. This recklessness of life has revealed itself also in the free States, for it was encouraged by the decay of justice, and by that sentimental sort of mercy which would pull down the lawful gallows and make the murderer's dungeon soft and inviting, or, on the plea of temporary insanity, set him at large in society. What court does not have, almost every term, some one on trial for the assassination of a man? How accustomed have we grown to this greatest crime of one human being against another! A few years ago, if the most prominent lawyer of Springfield, Ill., had been shot dead, it would have been the slaying of only a man!

But now it is more. It is not the murder of Abraham Lincoln, it is the deliberate murder of the President of the United States. You and I had no other President. If you voted for another—if you preferred another—you acknowledged him as your Chief Magistrate for the next four years. You read in your Bible, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God." You might not all endorse every policy that he put forth, but you were ready to give your support to him as the President. And now our President lies dead, and we realize what an enormous crime it is to slay the ruler of a people. Oh! if our rightful and

righteous rulers are not safe, then who is? It is not a crime against a man, but against the office of Chief Magistrate.

Nor is this all. It was not only *a crime against the Presidency*, but it was intended as a death-blow to the policies which were adopted by the Administration, and sanctioned by the overwhelming majority of loyal men, as the best measures for restoring a divided country and securing a permanent peace in righteousness and humanity. It was an effort to subvert the sound democratic principle of this Republic, that the majority of rightful voters shall rule. *The aim was to murder the President and his policy.*

I do not stand here to express any admiration or disapprobation of the slain President. History will call up all that deserves a record for that future which will not fail to do justice to his memory. It is not my place to attempt the shaping of your politics; but I have one simple method of settling my own. And this determines my relation to the man we called President. It is to keep myself clear of all party spirit and strifes. I cannot afford to distract myself with partizan questions, nor can I enter very deeply into the writings upon Constitutional law.

My plan is this:—*First*, to see what principles God lays down in his inspired word to guide the moral subject and the patriotic Christian in their duties to the Government which protects them. *Secondly*, to look where the Christian Church is going, and, at least, to move on in her wake. For the Church is expected to follow Christ, who cheerfully paid his tax to the Government and raised up an Apostle who declared disobedience to rulers a ruinous crime. And if any large class of men are about right in their views of political sins, dangers, and measures, they are the Christians of these loyal States. Let me be with them, for were I among immoral, intemperate, disobedient, violent and hypocritical men,

who scoff at the gospel, "despise dominion and speak evil of dignities," it is generally, though not quite always, seen that I am among those who sympathize with treason, uphold rebellion, sneer at loyalty, threaten and curse their rulers, and who, to-day, as far as they dare, are rejoicing in the deed that has robbed the nation of her Chief Magistrate. It is not congenial company. It is not safe company, for "he that is glad at calamities shall not be unpunished."

Now I took these rules for my guidance early in 1861, when my mind was as nearly a blank in regard to national measures as a cautious conservatism could make it. I confess that I had no predilections in favor of Mr. Lincoln. And what did I see? The President elect leaving Springfield, and honestly, feelingly, asking the Christian people of the land to pray for him—and, as he entered upon his office, taking first the Book of God, and next to it the Constitution of the United States. That Bible shaped his convictions of right, and that Constitution directed him in his public measures. To him, God was the great Father—how often he thus called Him in his proclamations—whose purposes would be fulfilled, and the President was but an agent in His hands. What the Divine Word made to be sin and inhumanity, he believed must be put away, as God had declared, and he at length saw that this nation must "loose the bands of wickedness, and let the oppressed go free." He seemed raised up by God, not only to destroy the *viper*, rebellion, but also slavery, that *fiery serpent* that was poisoning the nation's life. That was his mission. It seemed plainer to me every day that he ruled.

And where were the Christian Churches of the land? In opposition? In league with rebellion and human oppression? Never was there such a unanimous movement of the moral and Christian forces of this nation in one direction, as during the last Administration. They

said to the President—We meddle not with politics; we did not all vote for you; we tamper not with questions of the State; but we bring up the Church that it may co-operate with the army in putting down treason and casting the great cause of these curses out of the land. We pray for you; we uphold you; we preach the cross, which gives a moral power to the flag of the nation; in the name of our God we lift up our banners; go on, and the Lord be with you, and prosper those measures which every honest conscience will approve as righteous in the judgment day. For, though this be not the only great national sin, yet we have "the manifest tokens *that the time has at length come, in the Providence of God, when it is His will that every vestige of human slavery among us should be effaced, and that every Christian man should address himself with industry and earnestness to his appropriate part in the performance of this great duty.*"—[*Minutes General Assembly Presbyterian Church*, 1864, *p.* 298.]

Could I refuse to move on with the great bodies of the Christian Church, when they thus recognized the mission on which God had sent the President? And when, one week ago this coming midnight, the bells were ringing, and our own silent spire listening to the stars, was there not some proof that neither the President, nor the Christian Church, nor the intrepid army, nor the great generals of this age, had been mistaken in their measures for accomplishing the two vast objects before them—the crushing of the rebellion and the emancipation of the slaves? It was for these two purposes, it seems to me, that this great and good man was raised up. The world will know and history will tell that Abraham Lincoln was President when these two magnificent achievements were gained; and if I am so happy as to have my name recalled in some little circle that meets in the next century to talk over the deeds of their fathers, I want it to be understood that no hand nor voice of mine was ever lifted against the man who was shot the very week that

victory was making music for a people rejoicing in the beginning of their freedom from treason and from inhuman oppression.

Dead, dead, dead, is he—our President, whose heart was full of tenderness even to the guiltiest—whose pen was almost in the ink to write some proclamation of amnesty—whose invitation was soon coming to the glad people, who have given their wealth, their sons and their prayers to the nation, to assemble and give thanks to Almighty God, "whose right hand and holy arm hath gotten us the victory"—the President, whose last smiles were in thinking that the sad conscripts might be released, and the weary soldier soon discharged, and the wounded patriot soon on his own couch at home, telling his neighbors, over and over again, how he had bravely fought, and always believed that the righteous cause would conquer—whose honesty and fearlessness rendered him so unsuspecting that he could have taken in his forgiving bosom that viper from the land of trouble and anguish, which inflicted upon him the last revenge of the treason and slavery which had nursed it and imparted to it the revenge of their expiring life. Yes, our President is dead!

And who slew him? Not that actor, who, by playing tragedies, had hardened himself to enact one of his own; not the wretch alone who fired the shot, sprang upon the stage, flourished his dagger, and shouted "*sic semper tyrannis*," the motto of Virginia perverted into the text of treason. He is not the real author; he is only the agent of those who stimulated him to the deed by their cries of "down with the tyrant." It is a class hard to define. No party name will apply to them. No politics will describe their creed. Men, who *honestly* disapproved of the President's measures, could stand up manly and dignified and oppose his course with argument and without detraction. They were men of unquestionable loyalty and devotion to the government, and if they disliked

the present administration they acted like patriots, and waited with patience for a change. If these men had risen, like Cromwell, solemnly before God and the world, carrying with them the Christian prayer and piety that he did, and proved that the ruler was a tyrant, and impeached him before the high courts, and then, slowly, and sternly applied death to him as the last remedy for the national evils, we should pause before the event and ask whether the act was really a crime. No such course was dreamed of by the *honest* and *honorable* opponents of the President. Nay, they spurned the idea that there was tyranny in that Chief Magistrate whose every letter, every message, every speech, every grasp of the hand, proved that he loved the whole people, and did not claim to be unerring in his judgment. And they weep to-day over the horrible thing that is done in the land.

But these men who incited the assassins—they could hold no just rank with reasonable opponents—they had no creed, except such as they could glean from the Richmond papers and their echoes at home, and therefore only curses fell from their lips. No matter what plans the administration adopted, in obedience to the people's voice, they were always on the other side. Now one thing, now another, but always full of tenderness for treason and malice against the President. Perhaps some of them repented when they found that his measures were becoming effective and national. Some of them may have such a horror of murder that they deeply lament this endangering crime against the Presidency. They perceive that they never felt any tyranny, and they have a terror of anarchy. I do not refer then to them.

But there are two tests by which you may know whom I impeach before the public, as the stimulators of this murder. One is, who wished it to be committed? None will now dare acknowledge such a desire; and yet they may be known by the other test—who are rejoicing over

this crime? The perpetrators knew what certain sympathizers with treason wished to be done. They knew there were treasonable and desperate people mingling with the loyal citizens of our country, for only under the loyal President could they be safe and free, and putting forward their pretensions to loyalty on every hand. And these people have wished the Richmond Government to succeed; they have gone about, in their utter ignorance of Scripture, with "Bible arguments" for slavery and rebellion; they have insulted the Most High by saying that "God has nothing to do in this war;" they have reviled the Christian Church by asserting that she was the author of the national troubles; they have shouted "violation of the Constitution" with lusty lung, while violating it themselves, and trampling down human and divine laws; they have revelled in their shame, and gained impudence enough to curse the President and the government on the streets; they have despised every national song and put contempt on the flag of the brave; they have shouted their cheers for the arch-rebel, and sung "up with the traitors and down with the stars;" they have scoffed at patriotism and sneered at the soldier returning, a mere skeleton, from the prisons of a barbarous foe; they have only wanted an Absalom to raise the standard of a new revolt, in which not a moral or a godly man could be found, and they were ready to flock to it; they have had their "circles" and conspiracies in the Northwest, and some of their number have shot down officers of the government; and when the dreadful tidings of our occasional defeat put you all into lamentation, they have crept out of their holes and rejoiced, but an awfully sad countenance hung on them when the land was full of shouts for victory. These were the men, yes,—and shall I say it?—the women, who wished to see done just what the tragedian (bolder than they) has accomplished. Oh! it is their victory, and some, upon these streets, yesterday, were

willing to claim it. These are the people whom the deadly viper represented and whose venom he embodied. Let us know with whom we are living, and let the power of a righteous indignation be publicly felt.

Let there be no violence against such persons, but let them know, quietly, that there is a sense of justice in the popular heart, and a law in the Commonwealth that will not brook such insults to humanity, to civilization, to Christianity and to God, and you will find that Daniel Webster's remark will be proved: "There is no greater human power on earth than the tremendous indignation of the people." Let justice be restored to her place, for without her principles all mercy is but meaningless pretension. Let them understand Paul's words, "they that resist (their lawful rulers) shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power (the ruler)? . . . For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Educate men up to this point of orthodox faith and conduct, and no more Presidents will be murdered.

There are deeds which reveal themselves as only the concentration of many influences—the climax of a long series of general evils. This is one of them. The murder of a President is a horrible thing in the land, *but it is more horrible still to be compelled to believe that this deed is only the evidence of a somewhat extended malice and a deep rooted depravity of the serpent.* That crime is but the cropping out of a more general wickedness that underlies it. The three chief sources of that crime are slavery, rebellion, and a sympathy among us for both of them. And there are times when a murder must be charged home upon a certain class of men, who under the cry of

tyranny sought anarchy, and not merely upon the agents of their desires.

What did Peter say to the Jewish people? That Judas was the author of the great crime on Calvary? That the men who actually pierced the Lord, were the assassins? Nay: he remembered how, for long months, the cry had been raised against Jesus; how curses had been pronounced and threats uttered; how the general voice had rang in the streets, "Not this man, but Barabbas"—quite in the same spirit that some have said, "Not the loyal President, but the arch-traitor." Peter boldly declared in the face of those who had nursed up the greatest crime that ever had been committed against that nation and against God, "Ye are the betrayers and murderers." That preaching brought repentance, and we now need more of the same sort. History has given her verdict against that people, though they "did it ignorantly in unbelief." "Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory."

What shall be the verdict of just history in this case? That the perpetrators and sympathizers did it ignorantly? Far be it from me to say that all who have stimulated others to this crime, really intended that it should be committed. Many of them did not mean what they said, when they shouted, "Down with the tyrant," and others had no intellectual or moral perception of crime. Or will history involve us all in this deed, because certain men have made themselves vile with treasonable sympathies, and we restrained them not. You cannot—I cannot—feel that we had any individual part in this crime. But a part of this nation is involved in it, as much as a part of the Netherland Republic was identified with the man who fatally stabbed the Prince of Orange—that part which to-day love the treason, though they hate the traitor; love the murder, though they, perhaps, would not dare to hide the murderer. And it seems as if God were saying to this nation, "You have not checked the

malice that led to this crime; you did not spoil the powder that sent that deadly ball through the brain of your President; you have winked at the public sins that have intensified into one great assassination; your garments will be somewhat stained, unless you shake off the viper from your own hand, by giving more power to the public sentiment of respect for your rulers and for the ordinances of God."

O, let us confess before God the sins of those, who have provoked Jehovah by their malicious sympathies with treason and their utter want of patriotic devotion. Let us confess that law has been dishonored for long years, and justice has been slain in the streets. Let us confess that we bowed and cringed too lowly to that political power which was, for thirty years, laying its foundations in slavery, and at length endeavored to crown the edifice with rebellion. The leaders of that scheme demanded that we acknowledge it, foster it, set up on high, and receive it as the best form of civilization—that all the free States crouch down before it, and in the face of our superior social and moral culture, and our intellectual and Christian elevation, confess our inferiority—confess that we were a drivelling class of mammon-seekers and craven-hearted hirelings—and that all chivalry, all aristocracy, all sacred nobility were among them. We must go back there to find the original causes of the President's death. Yes, we went too far astray from the rectitude of the men in whose blood the charters of our liberties were written, and more blood was requisite from our people, and even from our President, to give us a full conviction of the tremendous magnitude of those national sins which were destroying the nation.

Nor have we yet reached the limit of this tragic deed. *It is a crime against the gentleness and generosity of the President.* He set aside the long established political doctrine that to the "victors belong the spoils." Did he show any partiality to the party that elected him, for

one hour after the war was opened upon us? Did he select his generals from that party alone? If he, after great pressure from all quarters, set aside any officers, it was not that he might place men who were originally of his political views in their stead. No man more thoroughly ignored politics, rose above party, and recognized enlightened patriotism in whomsoever he found it. Look at his Cabinet; look at the army; look at the appointments in all military positions; and you see this carried so far that he offended certain men who claimed his consideration simply because they had voted for him. What if they had? The country had other men quite as capable, and he would satisfy all parties, if largeness of views, and generosity of soul, could possibly affect them. And how can you account for the fact that most of the men appointed from other parties, worked with him so harmoniously, gradually became convinced that his measures were best, and became among his warmest friends? And how account for the fact that hundreds of other prominent men were won to his views, and voluntarily, and without any hope of position under him, sustained him to the last? Only by taking these facts as evidences that they perceived the justice and nationality of his policy, the nobleness of his nature, the purity of his motives, the single aim of his eye, and the righteousness of the great cause which ought to know no party, and make the love of country second only to the love of the Redeemer. And how generous was he in all his proposals to conquered foes, to subdued States, and to surrendering armies! And I verily believe that the kindness of the amnesty he was about to proclaim would have astonished the civilized world. No other such smile could have gone like a genial spring-time over all the South, as that of the cheerful, hopeful, gentle, generous, winning man, who stood looking southward as a father, to welcome the repentant prodigals returning home. Seeing them yet a great way off, he would have

ran to meet them, that, falling into each other's arms, they might weep together, and forgive and be reconciled. If this were not enough to melt the heart of that tragedian, who was permitted to walk so freely the streets of the capital, then he must have let the malice of his abettors stultify every sentiment of gratitude, and been moved with spite at the signal mercies of the very man who held out to him a gracious pardon.

Moreover, this crime against the Presidency, and against the national measures, is also *a crime against the patriotism of the loyal people.* In order to bring out this patriotism, rising infinitely above all partizanship, God has introduced three crises of trial, thus separating those who truly love their country from those who would betray it.

One crisis was brought in that proclamation, just four years ago, calling for seventy-five thousand men. The boom from Fort Sumpter prepared the way for the answer to the telegram, and we had a united North. Just four years ago to-day it was read on street corners and from pulpits, and men began to organize on the spot. Men then thanked God that the plot to murder this same President had failed. Politics ceased to be; patriotism reigned supreme. Everybody vowed before God to sustain the Chief Magistrate. That crisis passed, and all felt that the rebellion must go down, if it laid low every interest of the conspirators. The President felt sure that all hearts were loyal, and that, with the combined help of the people, God would turn to us the victory.

The second crisis was in the fall of 1862. The rebels thought they would succeed, and their hopes found sympathizers among certain men who were too cowardly to join their army, but remained here to hiss their treason. There was no need, they thought, of an assassination. Loyal men looked to heaven, but a great cloud hung dark in the sky. The President saw just where to strike

the one fatal blow to the rebellion and its cause. From his pen came the test to all men, even his best friends. I shall never forget how it tried my soul. We were entering New York bay, when we got a paper from a pilot-boat. For months we had heard men in England and on the Continent saying to us, "You will never put down that rebellion. History and Providence are against you." When we left Liverpool we knew not what was the result at Antietam. During twelve long sick days at sea, this Continent might have sunk and we not have known it. And the paper was full of the proclamation. Three months more of rebellion and slavery must be destroyed. Not a man said, Amen. But one Virginia lady, an exile from that state for loyalty, had the courage to say, "It will destroy the rebellion—the cause and the curse will go down together." The results are proving her a true pophetess.

I do not pretend to read the secret counsels of my sovereign God. But when Providence so manifests His purposes that they are written in public events, it is no arrogance to read the interpretation. It seems to me that in the year 1862, He said to this nation: "This war shall go on until my victories are accomplished. It shall go on until party politics shall give way to eternal principles of righteousness. Ye shall have defeats and difficulties until your aim is to seek a Union which shall not have in it again the elements of inevitable disunion. Ye shall be humiliated until ye put away the accursed thing, and break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free. Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and God shall be rear-ward. Then, with every fleet and every moving column you shall have victories, and great surrenders will be the order of events." And has it not been so? No one seemed to hear God's voice two years ago last autumn so clearly as the President. His proclamation made that time a crisis.

That crisis passed—but there were revived sympathies

with the politics of Southern treason, which vented their fiendish spite on the night of the last Good Friday, and despairing traitors murdered the best friend they ever had! Oh, does it mean anything, that our President was murdered on the anniversary of the same day on which our Lord was crucified? I carefully guard against any comparison between the two persons, but in one point the two crimes were alike—they were both the deeds of a class, who hated a great movement for the good of humanity, and entertained a secret malice against its author. Almost the entire people, at that crisis, finally poured themselves forth upon the side of the Chief Magistrate, but the dregs of dead parties remained to bring into reality this great crime of their secret souls.

The *third* crisis came in the victories of the last twelve days. The President was spared long enough to stand safe in Richmond and telegraph the victory. Would not all men shout the triumph, shake hands, and pour out their gratitude to God? Would not the lovers of treason give up their sympathies, and their malice against the President? Everybody seemed to throw out the banner, and wear a joyful countenance, and would not the very last remnant of dissatisfaction and depravity repent, and flock as doves to render thanks to Almighty God? No: two accomplices in Washington knew it. They knew their deed would be hailed with secret delight among certain ones, who owe more to that slain President than to any man who will be buried for years to come. This crisis will bring them out to public view. It will separate between the nationally righteous and the wicked. The whole Church and all who are in the habit of truly worshipping God will lament, saying, "How are the mighty fallen!" The immoral, the disloyal, and the ungodly and hypocrites, whom our Lord would have called a "generation of vipers," will gather in dark corners, and hiss their exultation, not only because the President is dead, but because the Secretary of State even while

despatching to Europe the victories of our arms, has been stabbed, and while bleeding away his life, must also weep it away over a brave son, who seems a dying victim to the gasping powers of rebellion and slavery. Thank God, General Grant was not within their reach, and thank God, too, that He says to us, "Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils." "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, He will save us."

This great crime will fall like a holy baptism upon all loyal men, but it will sweep like an avenging fire through the land to purify it. It will be seen that it was not a blow at the man but at the Government. It is the malice begun at Sumpter, ending at Washington, and one of the providences will be that it will again give us a united North. It is the dying scorpion stinging itself as the final display of its power. And perhaps this mysterious providence may be interpreted. I may venture upon the interpretation that first arose in the minds of patriotic men. It is, that there may have been danger from the admirable moderation and fatherly spirit of the President. He might have been too lenient toward the leaders of treason who brought war upon us, slaughtered thousands of patriots, and by a back stroke have now taken the life of the man who pitied them most. And God seems to be saying by this event, "Hang your traitors! Take your justice from David, and your mercy from Christ; for the mercy of the cross is founded upon the justice of God in the atonement." Another must take his place, and may God give Andrew Johnson sufficient grace to execute justice upon all who have said by their sympathies and their crimes, "Let us kill the President that the government may be ours."

My friends, I would not be vindictive. It has been a struggle with me, ever since yesterday morning, to get from Mount Sinai to Cavalry, and even there the dying Jesus, the Lord of all, is revealing to us the Divine

Majesty of Law. He endures the justice of the Infinite Law, that he may purchase for us the mercy of the Gospel. He sees two malefactors enduring the death penalty, one on each side of his own cross, yet he does not release them by miracle, or by command. The law must have its course, and of their sufferings one of them declares, "We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds." This guilty man seems to be brought to repentance by the justice he endures and by his own sin, in contrast with the innocence of the Holy One, who "hath done nothing amiss," as well as by the gracious power of the Spirit of God. He prays for Christ's remembrance of him, and Jesus assures him of being that very day in Paradise. Would that this Spirit of Jesus, this "gentleness of Christ," might be in the public mind, if the assassins in this present tragedy be arrested. And may their punishment lead them to repentance, and to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. May no degree of calm justice be withheld from them, but may they not be denied our prayers, nor the saving power of their God. My prayer is for their arrest, their punishment, and their salvation in death. The law has no forgiveness for them, but if Jesus purchased a pardon for them, may they behold "the severity and goodness of God," and even at this late day, open their hearts to Omnipotent mercy. And let each of us be sure that we appreciate the justice which He suffered on our behalf, and accept the mercy which results from His atonement. Since our nature had a guilty part in the crucifixion of Christ, may our souls have a saving part in that "blood which cleanses from all sin."

No President, since Washington, was so much a man of the people. Washington had most bitter enemies in his day, but justice and history had their revenge in consigning them to the doom of forgetfulness, and elevating him, whom they were anxious to cast down from his

excellency, to the lofty place as "the Father of his Country." It must be for justice and history to decide whether the friends of Abraham Lincoln are mistaken in thinking that he will be ranked, in future time, as the Father of the people in the restoration of the Republic. These are not the days to judge of him, though every hour will be full of his praise. These are not the circumstances to trust in him. He was immortal till his work was done; and now, when it is done, and his very death is made the divine seal of approbation of his measures, and the token that they will be carried out with an even sterner hand, until justice, union and freedom are fully established, he is taken away that we may not put our confidence in man, nor limit our thanks to him whom God had girded for the victory. "The Lord gave, the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

This crime has made a martyr at the White House. I do not claim that the President was a saint. Would to God that, if his time had come, he might have died in another place. I judge him not. But he was a martyr to his honesty, his love for the people, his frankness and singleness of mind, his foresight and discernment, his tenderness, his fatherhood, his broad and deep humanity, his firmness in the conviction of duty and of right, and, may we not hope, to his faith in that Redeemer who died for him on that very same day of the Christian calendar. I have good reason to believe that he daily read the word of God, that he maintained family prayer, and that he hoped that a work of grace had been wrought in his soul during the years that he has borne responsibilities greater than any man who ever filled that highest position to which our countrymen can elevate a "plain man of the people." If he was a Christian, this terrible blow leaves us to weep, not for him, but for ourselves.

His work was done. His policy was established. The blow aimed at it has not destroyed it, but rather stamped

it with the seal of eternal endurance. Slavery and treason will die together, and there will be no resurrection. And how did he regard himself? Only as an agent in God's hand; a mere pilot under a great commander, a subordinate under the God of nations. The "plain man of the people," as he called himself, is now silent in death, but the Omnipotent Commander lives.

In him the President would have this nation trust. His inaugural of last March was a most remarkable proof of his faith in the God of our fathers. Said he:

"The Almighty has His own purposes. 'Woe unto the world because of offences, for it needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.' If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and He now gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from these Divine attributes which the believers in a loving God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the Nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and among all nations."

Oh! there is one widow weeping to-night as never widow wept in the Presidential mansion. There is one group of orphans on whose lips the word *father* will tremble, and its whisper will call up the most horrible tragedy this nation ever knew. May the Great Father bind up their wounded hearts, and the Good Shepherd lead them evermore in the green pastures where their souls may be restored; and now, while they are in the

valley of the shadow of death, where they parted from him on whom they leaned, may they have the presence of Him who will never leave nor forsake them.

And when this nation turns away from the grave of Abraham Lincoln, history will sit down there and calmly trace on the monument these words, taken from the chapter which, by inspiration, reveals the President's policy and records its success: "Thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in." (*Isaiah* lviii.)

And his successors will "build up the old waste places," and "raise up the foundations of many generations."

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